

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 19, 2005

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05-19

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**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH URGES CITIZENS TO TAKE A
LOVED ONE FOR A CHECKUP**

(RICHMOND, Va.)—Many people wait until there is an emergency before they go to the doctor, but the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) wants to remind Virginians of the importance of preventative care. Sept. 20 is Take a Loved One for a Checkup Day, when people are encouraged to take a friend or family member to a health care provider and take charge of their health.

“Regular checkups can identify chronic illness and delay or decrease complications,” said State Health Commissioner Robert. B. Stroube, M.D., M.P.H. “You can help your friends and family by encouraging each other to get a checkup or other screening.”

The campaign, recognized as Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day in previous years, was developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and many partnering organizations. It was created to inform and educate minority communities about health disparities, empower individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles and obtain access to health care.

Health disparities are differences in health outcomes or disease occurrences that occur by gender, race and ethnicity, education level, income level, disability, geographic location or sexual orientation. Some health disparities, including diseases such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease and HIV, are potentially avoidable. VDH and community-based organizations are finding creative ways to overcome socio-economic factors and provide access to medical care and information.

Regular health care, including preventive care, can enhance and extend the lives of those you love. Certain health problems can be prevented and others can be treated. Help those you love do something good for their health on Sept. 20. Go with them to visit a health professional or make an appointment to see how they can take care of their health.

For more information on activities planned for Take a Loved One for a Checkup Day, contact Mary Goodall-Johnson, J.D., at (804) 864-7432. To learn more about preventing chronic disease and reducing health disparities, visit www.vdh.virginia.gov.

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